



Maine Department of Economic and Community Development

Committed to helping Maine businesses and communities thrive.

## Maine Connections

### Greetings!

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As this is my first *Connections* as acting Commissioner, I want to say how excited I am to have this opportunity to work in this capacity for the Department of Economic and Community Development. I have

always enjoyed my work at DECD and greet what lies ahead with enthusiasm and commitment to Maine's economic success.

As you know, DECD's top priority is to create economic opportunity for the people of Maine. Our key role is to help make this a reality and to bring prosperity to all areas of the state. Governor Baldacci's recently expanded Pine Tree Development Zone initiative is a tool that is helping us accomplish this.

I look forward to helping make a difference and to getting the good news out about all that Maine has to offer. In this issue, we highlight some of the good work our offices have accomplished recently. Stay tuned for more.

Enjoy!

Thaxter R. Trafton



## December 2009

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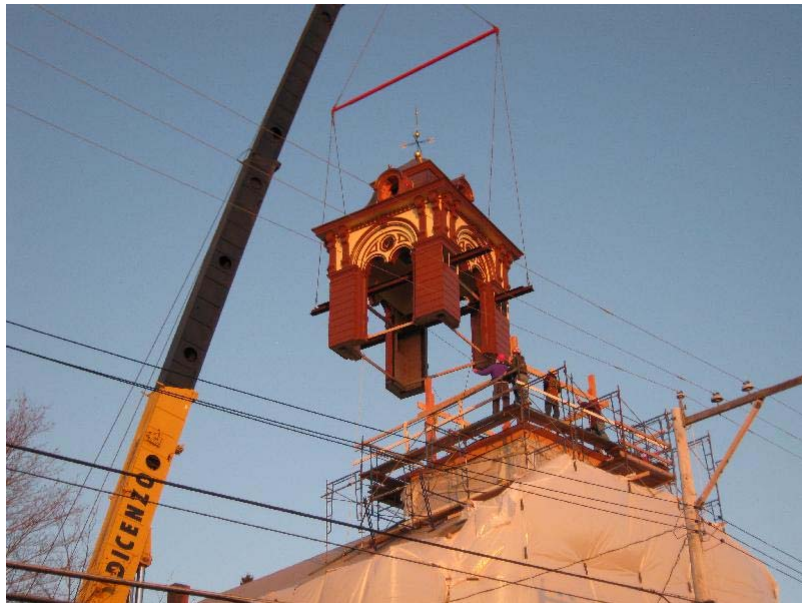
## A Community Development Block Grant at Work

In the seaside town of Machiasport, the Liberty Hall has overlooked the harbor for well over 100 years. Originally this fine example of American architecture was used as the town's cultural and community center but over time, it fell into disrepair. In 2005, a group of Machiasport year-round and seasonal residents established the *Committee to Save Liberty Hall*.

"The project to **save and restore Liberty Hall** is a great example of a small, not very wealthy community partnering with the state to preserve its heritage," said Tammy Knight, project manager for the Office of Community Development. "The building was really in a state of disrepair and either had to be restored or demolished at some point. Its location, on a narrow, curvy road, in a small complex of historic buildings overlooking the site of the first Naval battle of the Revolutionary War, is quite impressive and gives a glimpse of how town life was organized in horse and buggy days."

An exciting part of the restoration project was completed in November as the newly restored belvedere was set atop of the Hall by a large crane.

The elected officials and concerned community members known as Friends of Liberty Hall spearheaded the effort and raised far beyond the matching funds for the **\$350,000 Community Development Block Grant** that was awarded to Machiasport this year. The community looks forward to the day when Liberty Hall will some day be used again for town



meetings, cultural events, dinners and will also house a small museum.

"They cared enough to put in the hard work to make it happen and the state stepped up with the necessary funding," said Knight.

For more information about the project, visit <http://www.libertyhallmaine.org/>

*Photo: The newly restored belvedere flies over Machiasport*

## Mobilize Maine - On the Move

Mobilize Maine, a new collaborative partnership between the Department of Economic and Community Development, Maine Quality of Place Council, FairPoint Communications, and the six regional economic development districts, is gaining momentum throughout the state as the six regions begin to implement the early stages of the process. Mobilize Maine is a grassroots approach to economic development where communities take responsibility for job creation based on indigenous strengths and assets of the region.

One aspect of the early stage consists of the regions' Community and Economic Development systems holding meetings to complete Discovery. Discovery is the process where community members, from business people and entrepreneurs, to homemakers, students and retirees, all gather together to brainstorm their region's indigenous assets and potential opportunities. Great ideas have come to light during these meetings.

For example, when mill owners in the Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC) region voiced concerns at a Discovery meeting about the large numbers of workers set to retire in the next ten years, a representative from a local college stood up and said "Why don't we work together to teach a next generation of residents the skills they need?"

It is through collaboration like this, that Maine communities can take control of their economic future and harness their natural resources.

As John Moore of Bangor Savings Bank said at an EMDC meeting in November on Quality of Place, "I hope you come away from this conversation believing that we are responsible for creating our own future. We have the necessary resources here at hand to create the future we desire and we have been doing a pretty good job so far."

## Old Town Canoe Expands

Last winter, Johnson Outdoors announced it would close its manufacturing facility in Ferndale, WA and consolidate its plastic boat manufacturing to Old Town. In November, more than 150 workers and state and company officials helped them celebrate the completed move into their new facility on Gilman Falls Avenue.

"We wouldn't be here today celebrating an exciting future without the help of Old Town and the great state of Maine," said Johnson Outdoors Chairwoman and CEO Helen Johnson-Leopold.

DECD's Office of Business Development Director Mark Ouellette, said the company's decision to consolidate their watercraft division in Old Town, **creating 48 new jobs**, was the result of many hours of planning and negotiation. A combination of business incentives helped to keep the company in Old Town and prompted it to invest in new facilities, purchase new equipment and

expand its operations.



"Old Town Canoe is synonymous with Maine," said Ouellette. "Maine has competitive tax incentives and business programs. Our team did its utmost to ensure Old Town Canoe remains and expands in Old Town. The workers here are the best in the world."

DECD helped the company with:

Pine Tree Zone status, which allows the company ten years of tax incentives tied to investment and job creation.

- A Community Block Grant of \$200,000 from DECD's Office of Community Development.
- Photo: Mark Ouellette and Bill Osborne, a Regional Coordinator for Business Development, celebrate the expansion.*

## Pat Eltman Receives Special Service Award

On November 3, the Maine Innkeepers Association presented Pat Eltman, Director of Tourism, with the **2009 Special Service Award** at the Annual Awards Dinner. Held this year at the Bar Harbor Club at the Harborside Hotel, the Special Service Award is presented each year to an individual in the hospitality industry, who has contributed to the betterment of the industry as a whole.



"In the lodging industry, we all feel that Pat has accomplished so much for Maine tourism," said Greg Dugal, executive director of the Maine Innkeepers Association. "We were pleased to present her with the award; she has worked tirelessly on our behalf."

"It was truly an honor to receive the Special Service Award. I feel privileged to be a part of the tourism industry and to be recognized by the people who work so hard to make Maine such a wonderful place to visit," said Eltman.

The Annual Awards Dinner was part of the 88th Annual



Maine Innkeepers Association Meeting and Conference held November 2 and 3 Hotel in Bar Harbor.

*Photo: Connie Russell, General Manager of the Samoset and President of the Maine Innkeeper's Association presents Pat Eltman with her award*

## The Juice 2.0 Creative Economy Conference

Enthusiasm and excitement was on the faces of most of the eight hundred participants of the Juice 2.0 conference held in Camden this November. DECD was a sponsor for the two-day event, which was a unique opportunity to network with organizations, public and private, and people involved in the creative economy from all areas of Maine.

"Maine has an abundance of creative, innovative people. Being able to come together at a conference helps these entrepreneurs discover the next steps in their endeavors, be it in the green energy economy or starting their own pottery studio," said acting DECD Commissioner Thaxter Trafton. "DECD is a key resource for all those involved in the creative economy."

Presenters included creative entrepreneurs, politicians, fishermen, new media pioneers, scientists, architects, energy efficient experts, artists, and economists. Communities shared their experiences in downtown revitalization. Quality of life aspects from downtowns to trail ways in nature were discussed and viewed as huge economic drivers and assets to be preserved.

DECD helped develop ten conference sessions, including:

- Making it in Maine: The New Face of Maine Manufacturing.
- Maine Foodies: Entrepreneurs with Great Taste.
- Maine's Biotech Sector: Superheroes in Lab Coats.
- Geeks in Black: Maine's Emerging IT Sector.

Mobilize Maine, which is helping to realize a new grass roots economic development, held a breakout session bringing people from around the state together.

Dr. Catherine Renault, Director of the Office of Innovation, unveiled Maine's new Innovation Investment Plan.

"At the conference, we told the story of the innovation economy in Maine," said Dr. Renault,



"This was an opportunity to network and meet each other across the sectors and industry clusters; to work together and do business together; to build bridges with other elements of the creative economy; and to build support."

Maine has been recognized nationwide as a state at the forefront of developing its innovative economy. The Juice 2.0 Conference was clear evidence that it's helping Maine emerge from the recession.

## **MTI Awards More Than \$111,000 to Support Growth in Three Targeted Technology Sectors**

The Maine Technology Institute's Seed Grants are a key element to Maine's innovation economy. Without them, many of Maine's creative entrepreneurs and businesses wouldn't be able to invent cool, new products like a carbon fiber sulkies and compost made from food waste provided by the hospitality industry. Seed Grants provide start-up funding to help Maine's businesses and entrepreneurs succeed in developing innovative and new products, processor or services.

MTI's board of directors recently approved 10 Seed Grants for companies to develop technologies that will advance Maine's innovation economy in the environmental, composite materials and information technology sectors. These awards, totaling \$111,739 support research and development in projects ranging from composite toe caps for safety footwear to cleaner burning, high-efficiency wood pellet boilers to be used with wood pellet burners.

For the full list of awardees and their projects, visit the [MTI web site!](#)

## **European Energy Mission Brings Visitors to Maine**

Just a couple of months after the Maine International Trade Center's (MITC) trade mission to Spain and Germany, interested investors visited Maine to learn more about our wind energy potential. Last week, a group of Spanish investors came to Maine for a follow up visit on December 2 and 3 to learn more about the wind projects that had piqued their interest this fall.

"The investors spent two days meeting with major developers in Maine that are working on projects over the next two years that would generate over 30 megawatts and require at least \$10 million in investment.

The group also attended the Maine Wind Energy Reception held at the Seaport World Trade Center in Boston hosted by MITC in cooperation with DECD. Joined by attendees and industry participants in the American Wind Energy Association's Offshore Wind Power Workshop, Governor Baldacci and University of Maine's Dr. Habib Dagher spoke, and a short film produced by Imageworks of Portland was shown - highlighting Maine wind energy accomplishments and supply chain capacities.

"This visit was stage one," said MITC president Janine Cary-Bisaillon. "We are working on a return visit of a full Spanish delegation interested in wind development and investment."

## **Upcoming Events:**

**December 17 - E2Tech's Forum** will be held at Maine Audubon in Falmouth from 7:30 to 9 AM. Catherine S. Renault, Ph.D, Director of the Office of Innovation will outline and seek comments on the proposed "2010 Science and Technology Action Plan" put together by her office and the Maine Innovation Economy Advisory Board.

For further details and to register, [click here](#).

Costs: Student E2Tech members are free; E2Tech members - \$15; Non member students - \$10; Nonmembers - \$25.

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**February 3 - The Governor's Conference on Tourism**

For more info or to register for the award's dinner and/or conference in Augusta, click [here](#).

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### **Nominations Open for Governor's Award for Business Excellence**

Nomination forms can be obtained by contacting Dora Dostie at 207-624-9807, by [e-mail](#) or by writing her at DECD, 59 State House Station, Cross Office Building, 3rd Floor, Augusta, ME 04333. The deadline for nominations is **Thursday, December 31, 2009**.